

VZCZCXRO2762
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #2473 2070643
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 260643Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2453
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 002473

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/26/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [KJUS](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: NINEWA: CHRISTIAN PC MEMBER ARRESTED IN CPI SWEEP

REF: A. BAGHDAD 02297
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 02396

Classified By: PRT Ninewa Team Leader Jason Hyland for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

[1](#)1. (C) Prominent Christian politician and provincial council (PC) member Gevara Zia Youkhana (Assyrian Democratic Movement - ADM) was arrested July 18 by the Iraqi Police (IP) in conjunction with a Commission for Public Integrity (CPI) investigation into misuse of public funds charges. ADM chairs for Ninewa, Basim Bello, and Dahuk, Edmond Youkhana, requested a meeting to discuss Gevara's detainment, which TL Knight and incoming TL Hyland hosted at the PRT on July 21st. Though not advocating for his release, they stressed the politicization of the process, citing the KRG's expansionist agenda in the Ninewa plains (under Article 140), which the ADM opposes. Youkhana said, "We are not here to ask you to try to release Gevara. The investigation should go through the legal system, but we want you to watch how it is different."

[1](#)2. (C) That afternoon, IPAOs Holtsnider and Polacheck traveled to the IP complex to get a first hand account of the situation from Gevara. He stated that his arrest had been professional, respectful and without handcuffs. He is allowed visitors, well-fed and is not being held in the general prisoner population. He has yet to be formally charged and he alleged the misconduct (using PC reconstruction funds to purchase school supplies) was not criminal. Like ADM chairs Bello and Youkhana, he claimed that his case is being handled in a political manner. His name had been released to the local media the day of his detainment and the other PC members under investigation were still free or at large (except Chairman Issa - REFTELS). He implicated Vice-Governor Khasro Goran (KDP) in these mechanisms, saying because the CPI North director Sulvani (REF B) is a KDP member, he is taking orders from Khasro. Gevara and the ADM chairs declared this investigation an attempt to discredit their party just as the Article 140 process is elevating tensions.

COMMENT

[1](#)3. (C) With a key figure in Provincial Council corruption allegations, former finance committee chair and PC member Francis Mansour (KA), possibly on the lam in the KRG, and six of the eight arrest warrants of this investigation unserved (all for KA members, including a Christian female PC member), the current activities of the CPI have taken a

decidedly partisan tint. The PRT will monitor the situation and press for the rule of law, as fierce political maneuverings continue in the lead-up to a resolution of the Article 140 process. END COMMENT
CROCKER